Draft Tree Protection Design Guidance

A. Site Planning

A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics

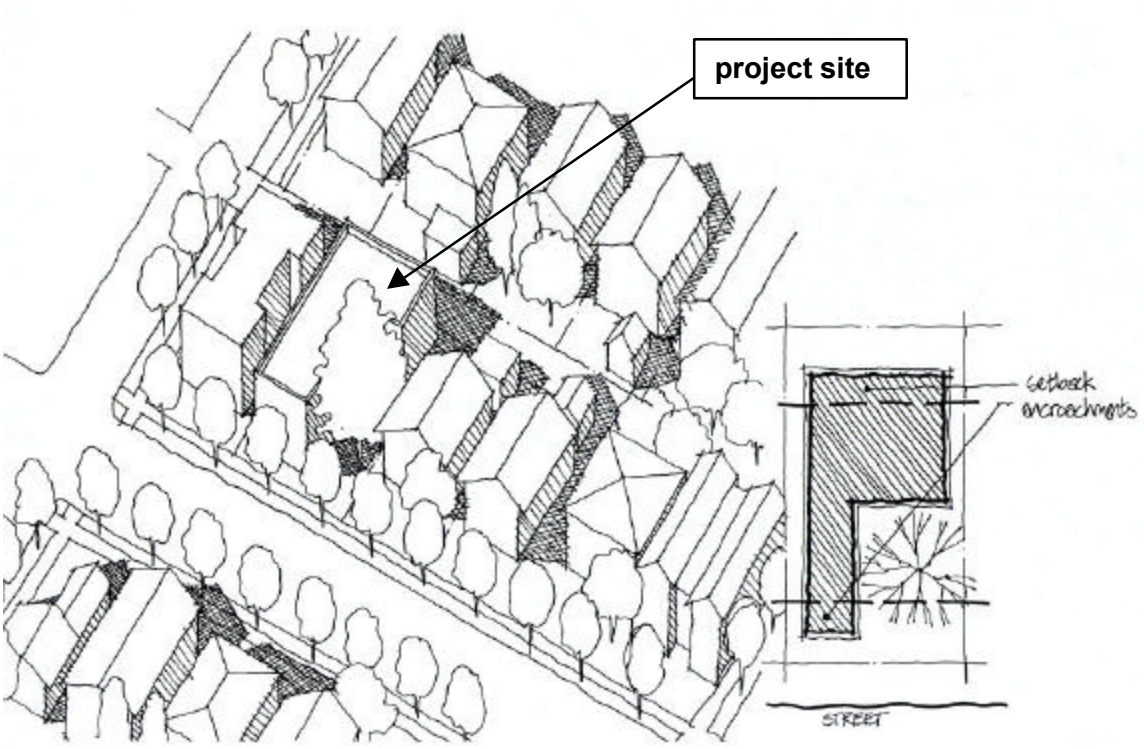
The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.

Existing Vegetation

Lowrise 1,2 and 3 Zones

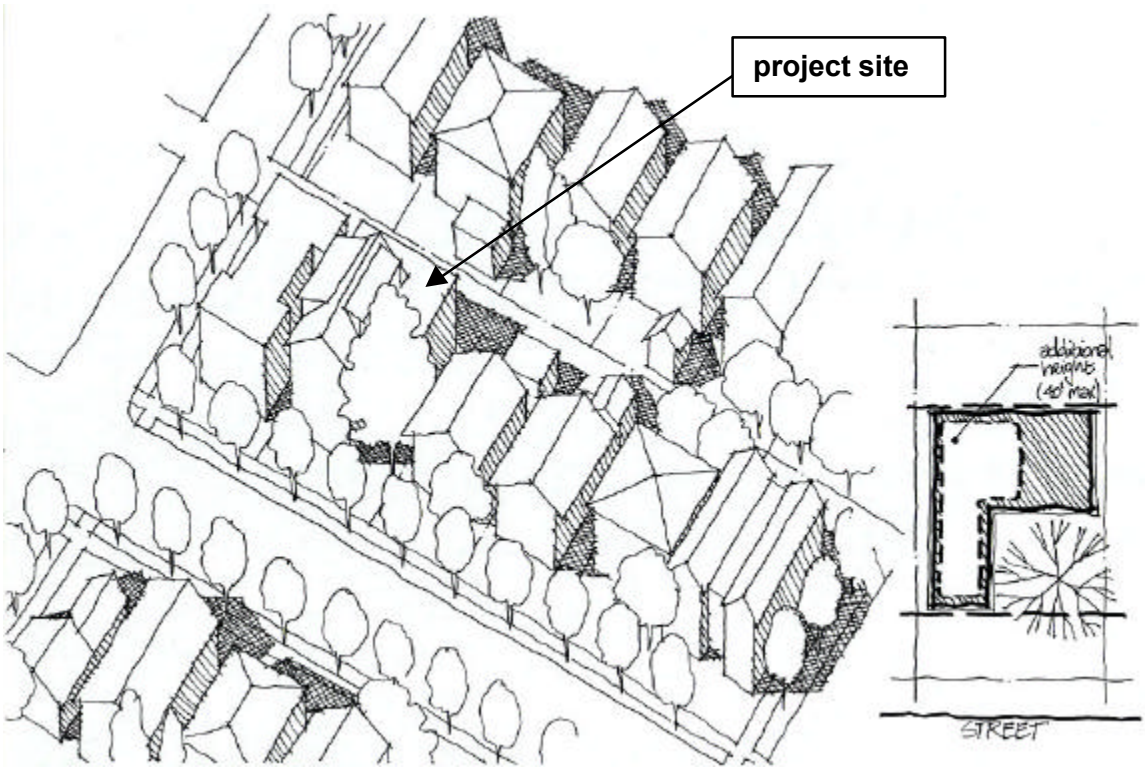
Maximum lot coverage, methods of height measurement and setback requirements in Lowrise 1,2 and 3 zones allow for a fair amount of flexibility in siting a reasonably sized building while protecting a heritage tree through design review. In siting and composing the building's footprint and massing, the context and character of the surrounding built and natural environments should be carefully considered to determine which of the following two methods of tree protection design guidance is most appropriate.

- In many cases, the careful siting of the building footprint and parking and access can enable the necessary portion of a heritage tree's root zone to be preserved. Departures from setback



development standards to allow the building to encroach into the front and rear yards provide a method to facilitate this approach. Careful consideration of the surrounding buildings with respect to scale, bulk and architectural character should help determine if this is an appropriate design solution.

- Since many Lowrise-zoned sites are adjacent to single-family houses and townhouses with substantial front and rear yards, encroachment into these yards and the resultant massing as



prescribed above may produce a building that is out of scale and character with the existing context. When streetscape continuity and sensitivity to properties to the rear of the subject site are important siting and design considerations, an increase in height to 40 feet as outlined in Section 23.41.012 A.2.b might be an appropriate design solution. In allowing the additional five feet in height, the rooftops of new buildings are expected to exhibit a form and style compatible with surrounding area. It is anticipated that most of these height allowances would occur in areas in which pitched roofs are prevalent, and therefore, the additional height must be accommodated in the pitched area of the proposed structure, and by carrying the pitch from 30 feet to 40 feet in elevation, a fairly steep pitched roof will result, providing the opportunity to appear increasingly slender and thus mitigate the potential impacts that could result in a 40-foot tall structure.

Factors to consider in designing the structure with the 5-foot height allowance – particularly regarding the siting and design of the pitched roof – include:

- alignment of the main ridge(s) of the pitched roof in the direction that allows the most light and air into adjacent properties;
- an analysis of roof patterns and features in the area to determine appropriate style (gabled, hipped, etc.) and other elements such as eave lines and dormer styles and proportions;
- ridge alignment and other methods to reduce the overall bulk of the roof when preservation of noteworthy views from upland lots is a consideration;
- exterior finish materials.

Lowrise 4, Midrise and Neighborhood-Commercial Zones
In preserving a heritage tree in a Lowrise 4-, Midrise- or Neighborhood-Commercial-zoned site, it is recognized that due to permitted lot coverage, parking and building envelopes, the siting and design modifications necessary to preserve the heritage tree could potentially result in a significant loss of development potential. The relaxation of development standards as listed below could, in many cases, recover the lost development capacity. Consider setting the building footprint –including below-grade parking- away from tree and its drip line per tree protection area standards, and recover development potential on upper levels. This would be particularly feasible if the heritage tree is located in a perimeter portion of the site.

Development standards a project proponent is encouraged to depart from in preserving a heritage tree include:

- Increased lot coverage;
- 10% reduction in required parking;
- decrease in open space requirement; and
- reduction in building modulation standards.